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# AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD

BY WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON

ALTHOUGH declination was a foregone conclusion, it was worth while to have the United States invited to participate in the *ré-chauffage* of Genoa at The Hague, for the sake of the replies which were given. Mr. Hughes in his letter to Mr. Child again disclosed the workings of a mind approximating Huxley's ideal of "a clear, cold logic-engine" in his impregnable and convincing exposition of the reasons why it was impossible for Republican America to have fellowship with Soviet Russia; reasons affected neither by the jingling of the hoped-for guinea nor by the glib camouflage of Moscow. Gladstone said that King Bomba had "erected the negation of God into a system of government". With equal truth it may be said that the Bolshevist oligarchs have formed a system of government out of aggressive negation of civilization and of humanity itself. Such a Government America cannot recognize; with it she can have no dealings. It may be too much to hope that the infatuated despots at Moscow will realize that fact; but surely the civilized Powers of Western Europe must now do so. In bringing them to that state of mind the Secretary of State has performed for them a service of the highest order; from which France seems inclined to profit by aligning herself with America. As for the suggestion which some have made, that America might well go to The Hague because the Conference there is to be purely economic, and not political as was that at Genoa, it is quite empty and futile. It was announced in advance that the Genoa Conference was to be exclusively economic, just as positively as the same announcement is now made about its adjourned session at The Hague. If that rule could not be enforced at the one place, there is no assurance that it can be or will be at the other.

An admirable complement to Mr. Hughes's presentation of the political aspects of the case was provided by Mr. Hoover in his discussion of its economic aspects. His address before the Chamber of Commerce of the United States was solicitous and sympathetic, with a sincerity which nobody in Europe or America will question, and it was also inspiringly optimistic. He expressed a fine faith in the integrity and stability of civilization despite the delay of some nations in the work of rehabilitation after the war, and he gave adequate reason for that faith by pointing out the incontrovertible fact that all the lately combatant States on the Continent save only Russia have in the more than three years since the Armistice made very definite progress toward normal restoration. The mere fact that they can say, with Siey  s after the Reign of Terror, "We have lived!" is proof of the virility of their institutions. Mr. Hoover's mention of the fact that Russia alone has made no such progress is by implication a damning indictment of Sovietism, and a confirmation of Mr. Hughes's wisdom in declining to enter a Conference in which Soviet Russia participates; the economic incompatibility between that country and America being no less marked than the political and ethical. Finally, in his "five points" of rehabilitatory policy for Europe, the Secretary of Commerce displayed a constructive genius and rendered a constructive service at least commensurate with his criticisms.

The transfer of the Conference from Genoa to The Hague inevitably arouses suggestive and instructive memories of former international gatherings at that capital. The two great Peace Congresses, whose work is not to-day as dead as many seem to imagine, were due to the initiative of Russia, but it was not Soviet Russia. The chief obstructive force, which defeated some beneficent proposals and seriously impaired others, was Germany; and while it was not the Social-Democratic Germany of to-day, it was one little removed from it in spirit and purpose.

The decision of a United States court that the California alien land law does not conflict with the Constitution or with any treaty made thereunder is of great interest to other States than

the one for which it is directly made. The law forbids the owning of real estate by aliens who are not eligible to citizenship in the United States. It is, of course, aimed at the Japanese, and may prove effective for debarring them from realty holdings. There has never, we believe, been any question of the competence of a State to forbid land ownership to unnaturalized aliens. Various States have done this, and the United States Government has done so, too, in the Federal territories. The new California law discriminates against those aliens who are debarred from becoming citizens, and this, the court decides, is quite permissible. Of course it throws the onus of the whole controversy upon the Federal Government, which refuses naturalization to Asiatics — or at least to Chinese and Japanese. The grievance which the Japanese believe they suffer is, therefore, not that California will not let them acquire land, but that the United States will not let them become citizens. If the United States would admit them to citizenship, not California nor any other State could debar them from land-holding. We may soon have before us the interesting spectacle of aliens who are unnaturalized and who prefer to remain unnaturalized becoming the owners of real estate, while that privilege is denied to others who earnestly wish to become citizens but are not permitted by the Government to do so.

Mr. Elihu Root's condemnation of slanderers of nations should be taken to heart by all who have any regard for friendly international intercourse, and for the honor of their country. "More quarrels," he truly said, "have come from insults than injuries;" and that is doubtless true. Burke declared that he did not know the method of framing an indictment of a whole people; but there are unfortunately many who know and practice the method of slandering and insulting whole nations. Our journalism and oratory—even Congressional oratory—have for years been sullied with persistent propaganda against certain foreign nations, chiefly marked with gross untruth and with insult. It seems easy to "slang-whang" against other lands and their peoples, and is too often a means of acquiring or increasing political popularity. Obviously, it would be difficult to suppress or to punish all such brutalities, but it ought to be possible to discourage it and to

make it odious. *Punch* once portrayed two London navvies as discussing whether a stranger walking near them on the street was a "furriner", and finally deciding to "'eave a 'arf brick at 'im", on general principles. That is not a graceful nor an ethical nor yet a profitable attitude for one nation to assume toward another.

The Secretary of War declares that he is not, and that the President is not, in favor of granting immediate independence to the Philippines. That means that they are opposed to granting the demand of the Filipino mission to this country, which is for immediate and absolute independence. This decision of the Government is based, of course, upon the report of General Wood, which shows public affairs in the islands, and particularly economic and financial affairs, to be in a wretched muddle, almost if not fully threatening collapse. It will be time enough to discuss independence when the insular Government is restored to integrity and efficiency. Whenever it is discussed, moreover, it should and doubtless will be borne in mind that the cutting off of the islands from our national domain would be a performance at once unique, gratuitous, and potentially embarrassing. Since our acquisition of the Louisiana Territory we have made several additions to our domain, but never have we in any way alienated so much as a single acre of land. Where the flag has once been raised in token of sovereignty, it has never been hauled down. It would be a gratuitous act, because we placed ourselves under no obligation whatever to perform it—but on the contrary proclaimed to the world our purpose not to do it, but to hold the Philippines in perpetuity. It will not do to cite the case of Cuba as analogous. The two cases are not only unlike but are aggressively different from and opposed to each other. In the making of the Peace Treaty in 1898 Spain strove hard to get us to annex Cuba outright; but we refused. She strove even harder and longer to get us not to annex the Philippines; but we refused. So it was written in the treaty and proclaimed to the world that "Spain relinquishes all claim of sovereignty over and title to Cuba", and that "Spain cedes to the United States the Archipelago known as the Philippine Islands". Precisely as in the latter case it had long before been written and agreed that "The First

Consul of the French Republic doth hereby cede to the United States the said territory" (of Louisiana), that "His Catholic Majesty cedes to the United States all the territories known by the name of East and West Florida", and that "His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias agrees to cede to the United States all the territory and dominion now possessed by his said Majesty on the continent of America". That is to say, we acquired the Philippines just as absolutely, unconditionally and permanently as we did Louisiana, Florida or Alaska. The world so understood it, as did our own citizens, and acted upon that supposedly assured basis. If now or at any time we should reverse the policy of our entire career, there would arise an interesting question of our moral responsibility to all who might be injuriously affected by such arbitrary repudiation of a formal treaty which they had taken as the basis of their dealings and enterprises.

Sir James Barrie's rectorial address at St. Andrews University was worthily reprinted in full in this country, and commanded current attention from the public scarcely less than that given to the latest unsolved murder mystery or salacious divorce suit. We shall not be surprised if it outlives in grateful memory any other item of news of the same week, or month. For gentle but compelling humor, for graceful but forcible English, and for high, brave, noble principles of life and conduct, it deserves rank among our best modern classics. One passage, which commentators with one accord found it comfortable not to exploit, deserves to be drummed into the ears of those who were at Genoa and will be at The Hague; though Sir James probably had no particular purpose of injecting it into current politics and diplomacy. "Another sure way to fame," he said, "is to know what you mean. It is a solemn thought that almost no one—if he is truly eminent—knows what he means. Look at the great ones of the earth, the politicians. We do not discuss what they say, but what they meant when they said it. In 1922 we are all wondering, and so are they, what they meant in 1914 and afterwards. They are publishing books trying to find out, the men of action as well as the men of words." That is quite true, and it is a truth that should sting more than one or two eminent men as a whip of scorpions.

American relations and interests are involved in the reëstablishment of the independent Kingdom of Egypt, because of the old system of extra-territorial jurisdiction. Before we became a participant that system had long been in effect. The Christian Powers of Europe refused to let their nationals be tried by the courts of Mohammedan or other non-Christian countries, and insisted that they should be subject only to the jurisdiction of their own consular courts. The United States first adopted that principle when Caleb Cushing, in President Tyler's time, negotiated a treaty with China. Of course it was also adopted in our treaty with Japan, but that Power soon began to chafe against it as putting upon Japan a brand of inferiority, and efforts were made to have it revoked. The United States was willing to abandon it, and negotiated a new treaty to that effect, to go into effect as soon as similar action should be taken by the Great Powers of Europe. As they did not take such action, the treaty was held in abeyance for some years. In the Chinese-Japanese war, however, Great Britain was moved to grant Japan's demand for treaty revision in that respect, and immediately our treaty was brought out of its pigeon hole and put into force. In Egypt the system of separate consular courts for each country was abandoned in favor of a general International Tribunal, with judges from the various interested nations. The United States took part in the creation of this court, and maintained an American member of it. But now the new Egyptian Government thinks that the International Tribunal should be abolished, and that all foreigners should be subject to the ordinary Egyptian courts. It cannot, of course be maintained that the change of status of the Egyptian Government cancels former obligations. The "capitulations" under which the tribunal was created are still valid. The new Government inherited them from the old. The real question is, whether the new Government is entitled to any more confidence and respect than its predecessor.